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MEETING MINUTES
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Date: December 14, 2021

Time: 11:00AM-1:00PM

Microsoft Teams Virtual Location: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or call in (audio only) [857-327-9245](tel:857-327-9245) **Phone Conference ID:** 340 146 417#

Agenda Items:

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Andrew Peck at 11:08am.

		Video/Call	Absent
1	Chair-Andrew Peck	X	
2	Scott Taberner	X	
3	Ryan Fraser*	X	
4	Sen. James Eldridge		X
5	Becky Michaels		X
6	Allison S. Cartwright		X
7	Commissioner of Probation-Vacant		X
8	Ret. Chief Fred Ryan		X
9	Diane Coffey	X	
10	Jennifer Kakley	X	
11	Judge Rosemary Minehan	X	
12	Kara Hayes	X	
13	Carolyn Boyes-Watson	X	
14	Erin Freeborn	X	
15	Restorative Justice Seat-Vacant		X
16	Susan Jeghelian	X	
17	Strong Oak Lefebvre	X	

*Rep. Sean Garballey

EOPSS Staff: Don Boyed and Anjeza Xhemollari

Others in attendance: Over 5+ members of the public attend the open meeting.

2. Welcome

Chairman Andrew Peck welcomed all committee members and attendance was taken. Committee members decided to go around in circle and remember Sister Mary Quinn.

Carolyn- I really want to say a few words in honor of Mary. In my view she was a real pioneer in restorative justice. I first met her at the very first conference in restorative justice in 1999. Over the next decade we put on so many events, small and large, and she was at virtually all of them. She presented at many of them about the work that she was doing in Hampden County. She was unfailingly loving and kind and generous in her spirit and interactions with everyone. She had a beautiful smile, and she was a true believer in restorative justice and unwavering in her conviction and support. I'm hoping we could consider dedicating a piece of our work to her.

Kara- I just wanted to say thank you for raising it and sharing those words about her. They're all true and I'm wondered if we could put something into our end of the year report.

Susan- Carolyn would you be willing to write a few sentences as a placeholder and then we can circulate it around?

Carolyn- Sure, I'll give it to Anjeza who will pass it to the right people.

Jennifer- My name is Jennifer Kakley and as you all know I've taken over from Mary Quinn. She was a great person and left a very big hole here in the Sheriff's Department. I just wanted to let you all know that she felt so strongly about this group, she loved being a part of it, and I hope that I can follow her footsteps. Thank you all for your nice comments about Mary.

3. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 9, 2021

Roll call was taken to approve the draft meeting minutes. Strong Oak made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, second by Kara Hayes. Meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

4. Funding Update

Senator Eldridge has secured \$80,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the restorative justice to conduct our inventory work. It was signed yesterday by the Governor through the efforts of Senator Eldridge. So, I just wanted to bring that to the attention of the committee. Credit goes to Senator Eldridge. Also, Senator Eldridge will add an outside section to expand representatives on the Committee. I think it'll be done through outside section FY23 state budget.

Erin-can we say thank you in the meeting minutes, especially because Senator Eldridge is not here today, and we've been waiting for this for so long. This is a great first step. He has been a huge advocate for restorative justice for many years and I think that this is another example of his strong advocacy for restorative justice and his belief in it.

Susan-Do you happen to know how many seats he's going to ask for?

Chairman Peck- I don't

Susan-is that something that we should be discussing and make a recommendation to him?

Chairman Peck-we could, but didn't we discuss this last month?

Anjeza-last month the meeting was only for an hour, and we started the conversation but there wasn't enough time, so we moved it to this month.

Susan-it's number 8 on the agenda.

5. Expansion of the RJAC membership and non-voting members (originally #8 on agenda)

Chairman Peck- I don't mind skipping down to 8 and talk about right now. I would just suggest being mindful of the size of the Committee. It's challenging with 17 members now.

Kara- I don't see Maria D'Addieco here today, but as she mentioned at last month's meeting adding non-voting members to our committee, in an attempt for inclusion, it creates two tiers of power on the committee itself. So appreciative of the Senator's advocacy on our behalf for that expansion but I also wanted to just bring Maria's comments from last month back into our meeting.

Chairman Peck-So, I guess the question remains. We would probably have to touch base with the senator because I don't know the likelihood of passing. I have no idea what will happen. Do we try to do this through outside section or add folks quickly as non-voting members?

Susan- It's been my experience that the outside sections have a good chance of being adopted if they're not posed. If there isn't a controversial kind of issue that needs public hearing. We are only trying to increase a number. It's a 17-member committee so if three or four seats are added it could balance out the numbers. We've always felt there should be more restorative justice voices on the committee.

Strong Oak-I was listening to Kara and Susan, and I think it would be good to add some voting members to the committee to balance out the voices. I think there's a danger in having a two-tier power structure, and I think the intent when we were talking about it was really to empower the observers. But in my experience, what I notice is that the observers have been having a lot of power in many ways by participating in the subcommittees. I'm hoping that maybe those folks can speak at the end of the meeting to talk about how they feel about that. I have a feeling that the non-voting members would end up being the diverse group and that would not be a good look at all. I just think that adding some real voting members to the committee might be a better option.

Carolyn- I would recommend a range of additional voting seats for restorative justice community folks and make that recommendation to Senator Eldridge. He could make the final determination. Also continue, to support the observer role as Strong Oak suggested.

Susan-I agree with Carolyn and Strong Oak. I think these people would be appointed by the Governor because that's the way it's written in the statute. So, I don't know if we have as much control over that. I think anyone could apply to the committee or be recommended so it would be helpful for us to make those recommendations, but I don't know if we have total control. I just wanted to reinforce that.

Strong Oak- Just like Susan said, we would make a recommendation and it would end up going to the Boards and Commissions and the Governor appoints. What we can do is make good recommendations. In terms of the non-voting members, I don't support that.

I am hoping the Senator would make the decision of the committee and add voting members.

Personally, as a member of the committee, I'm just really blown away by the consistent involvement that people have had, both on committees and subcommittees where a lot of the work is really happening and using circle process, their voices have been really equalized and represent of what gets brought forward in this committee. I don't think having a two-tier for non-

voting members it's a good idea because there are other ways to support the power of the community.

Carolyn- I would like to propose to Senator Eldridge to request six more additional voting members who represent Restorative Justice. Can we make a move? Andy, I understand that you are worried about us getting large as a committee but the benefit of large is "*many hands make lighter work*" and there is a lot that we are taking on this committee and we could have more hands on the subcommittees to do the work. I would like to add community members. Not to create another tear. Can we do that today and move this along?

Chairman Peck-Yes, more folks could be added on the subcommittee and get things done, but also its going to slow it down. I don't want to turn into this bureaucracy that we all complain about. I'm not opposed to adding folks from the community. I'm concerned around productivity.

Carolyn-I do appreciate that. I'm hoping to get some done and move this along today and make a request to Senator Eldridge. I'm not sure what the procedure is but I would propose adding six new voting slots for the community. Or we give a range three to six.

Chairman Peck- I'm OK with three being the floor.

Susan- Carolyn if you are making a motion. I'm willing to second it. Right now, we're talking about a motion that's three to six voting numbers from the restorative justice community.

Chairman Peck-Alright, to be clear. The motion is to add 3-6.
No fewer than 3 and no more than 6.

Roll call vote was taken. All present members voted yes. Motion carries

6. Update from the Questionnaire Subcommittee

Kara- I just want to recognize that both Carolyn and Strong Oak are here on the meeting and are members of the subcommittee. The follow up interviews with willing participants of that first round of the survey process continues. At this point, one thing that did occur to me and I raised it to Anjeza but was unable to do that with the collective subcommittee. Obviously, our work is covered by the open meeting law. Is there a way that our conversations or any notetaking that we collect and set interviews, is protected in any way? I wanted to defer to both Strong Oak and Carolyn about the things I didn't capture.

Carolyn- Just for everyone to understand. We divided up the initial respondents among us and we followed up with phone calls and conversations with a series of questions that are all in the annual report. The questions that we asked, and I assume that we will be giving this information back to the committee. What we learn from these interviews. These are conversations that are filtered through what I hear from people. We're doing it, listening and deep listening. I am a filter as is Strong Oak, as is Kara. It's not a transcript of what people are saying in any way. It's what I hear. I think that we will be presenting that to the committee at some point and it's going into record somewhere. We just must find the right vehicle for sharing that information. So far, I found the interviews very helpful.

Strong Oak- I wanted to say that you raised a lot of important issues. It would be good to get some feedback from this committee and the other thing I needed to say is that the people that I got assigned I wrote an e-mail letter and I have not gotten a single response back. I haven't been able to conduct any interviews, so I'm going to do another round of letters. I also notice in my group that I was assigned all of Erin's groups and I wonder if that was a good split. 1. I didn't

hear anything back. 2. Concerned about the open meeting law 3. I don't know how I got assigned one person for so many.

Chairman Peck- I'm no expert but I don't think the interview itself violates open meeting law. OK, so I guess the question is are your notes from that interview subject to open meeting law. Do I understand you correctly? I can't support my answer and I'm not sure, but I don't think they are. Obviously, anything that you report back then becomes subject to opening meeting law both in the subcommittee and a larger committee. I don't see Arielle here today, but we can check on that.

Kara- I appreciate that. We try to hold ourselves to a high standard and our public attendees do the same and this is important work that we're doing. My work as a victim advocate, it's not a surprising question for people to ask. What happens with the notes? Do you write any of it down? Like how does it get communicated? Also wanting to make sure we flush that out so if there was an inquiry later from any interested attendees that we had vetted that in a good way.

Erin-Strong Oak can you please email me the list of the chiefs that you couldn't get in touch with. My apologies to everybody for the delay. Our family was dealing with COVID for most of the month, so I'll connect with Strong Oak and make sure that you get a survey response for me and then I can do some additional in person outreach to try and get them to respond to you.

Strong Oak- I figured something was going on but it wasn't just you. None of my folks responded so I was concerned about that, but I'll conduct another round of e-mails and then I can resort the phone calls. But, in line with what we're talking about subjectivity, I wondered if we could offer them ZOOM and their words would be representative of what they said by offering them that. So, there's a record of it.

Carolyn- I propose that we hash this out at the subcommittee meeting. I have a lot of thoughts about these things. I don't know if everyone wants to hear them all. Everyone responded to me, and interviews take a long time. We will bring this information back. The purpose is to be meaningful to us. Not sure if we could meet in January. Have this conversation as a subcommittee.

Kara-fine by me. Hopefully I could get my work done and happy to work with Anjeza to get that done.

7. Update from the Annual Report Subcommittee

Susan-Anjeza asked me to give the report because Allison was not available. The annual report subcommittee is Allison, Strong Oak, Kara, and me. We've been joined by Carolyn and Erin to help work on the mission/vision statement. We've had excellent help and assistance and coordination from Anjeza, so everything we're doing is supported by her. I wanted to do a shout out to her. Since our last meeting we have collected all the sections of the report that various committee members have been drafting and putting it all together. Right now, what you have is a draft that has all the sections. But now we need to pull it together and we've planned for doing that. I had offered to be an editor for the full report. I won't be able to attend the next meeting in January, but Allison will present the annual report. Hopefully very close to final version of the report and I've been taking notes to make sure that some of this stuff we've been talking about today gets into the report.

We met on December 7th, and we did some further work on the mission and vision. Based on the input and the discussion at our last meeting in November and in the version of the report that was

sent out. The section that we worked on is highlighted in yellow in both the mission and vision. That's also an agenda item that we can look at.

The other thing we talked about the fact that in the looking forward section that I wrote. I drew all the insert people have been giving in the collecting mission/vision statements as well as discussions. There were some items we thought we need to make sure to confirm with the committee. Before we finalize it. So those items are kind of highlighted in blue. We don't want to just assume everybody is comfortable with it. So, we wanted to highlight that. If you're not comfortable or if you have a question or would like something and it's differently, we can change it. We can adjust it.

Chairman Peck- Thank you so much for taking this on and drafting the report. In terms of the 2021 year in review and events that occur broader in scale of society. Do we want to focus on our work?

Susan- We could pass that feedback along to Allison. She wrote this section up. I think she was writing it as a combination of an introduction into the report as well as summary of what we've been doing. We can share that feedback. We had only to presentations and a lot of the work has been committee work, and the subcommittee work has been written up individually.

Chairman Peck- On page 7 can we update to reflect the funding? and there's reference to an Executive Director?

Susan- That Executive Director goes into establishing the Office of Restorative Justice. Anjeza, can you share the screen.

Anjeza-teams not working but added information on the chat.

Chairman Peck- I'm sure that this is something that you'll get to, but just the formatting on both subcommittees it's not consistent and is there a way to rework the language of Becky stepping down as Chair.

Strong Oak- I thought that the sentence should be taken out too, but she did resign because of work stuff and that is not there. The committee ended its work at that point and there were no more meetings.

Susan-Was that an official ending or ended because there was no Chair anymore?

Strong Oak- The 4th meeting was cancelled and then we never had another meeting but many of the Planning Subcommittee findings ended up at the full committee meetings. To just reflect on the fact that the committee meet, and it had a lot of involvement from community members and that just about all its ideas are reflected in the report itself. Everything in there was derived from full committee reports. I thought it was important to mention that the Chair resigned, and we never did have another meeting, I don't know, it's not a judgment. One was scheduled but it never happened. The 4th one.

Chairman Peck- It sounds like work has been incorporated into the full committee.

Strong Oak- I think there was some question about reworking these subcommittees.

Erin-As a point of clarification, the e-mail I have from Becky resigning is July 19th. Point of clarification about the timeline.

Strong Oak- No. She resigned before then and I got my email. She resigned before the 4th meeting was going to happen. She emailed me separately.

Erin-Anjeza please check your e-mail as well and we could connect offline to clarify the date.

Strong Oak- I know, I already checked it.

Chairman Peck- Can we rework that language. The committee no longer meets. Language to that effect. It calls Becky out.

Strong Oak-It was not my intend. One of the things that I wanted to say and with all honesty is that when I was on that committee and attended all the meetings. When she resigned, she sent an email out to me and to others separately so that there wouldn't be any violation of open meeting laws. That's exactly what she said in the email and the very last meeting was contentious. There were people from the public that made petty comments and then we never met after that. The 4th meeting was cancelled, and I don't know how or why it got cancelled. Really stressful conversations that happened at that meeting. People of color were very upset. They thought that white women on the committee will get their way. It was very a tough meeting, and it wasn't fair. We never had another meeting after that. Some people here were part of that meeting. They heard that. I'm big on honesty and I don't know why we never had another meeting. It was never explained to me, and I don't think that's ok. It wasn't rescheduled or anything. Period. If I were Chairing that committee, I would have a hard time coming back.

Erin-I don't recall that being our last meeting. I want to bring the timeline back again and for Becky to be here for this conversation to continue. We did meet on June 22nd and subcommittee reported back to the full committee. I might have given that update in July. It seemed like a transition, we didn't have a Chair and we had established in this committee to come up with planning and structure. We brought back short-term goals and long-term goals and creating different subcommittees. I will be more than happy to share my notes.

Strong Oak-I do have the same date that July 27th meeting was cancelled. I'm not sure and I went through all the notes, and I save everything. I could work with you on this. I was just noticing that there was an April meeting and that reflected on the notes. There was one in May and there was a gap between that and the next meeting. We didn't meet after. You want to work together?

Susan-Can I suggest to Erin that she could look at what Strong Oak wrote and write a paragraph to supplement any additional information. Maybe you both confirm back to me, and I will add it to the annual report.

Erin-Yes, what's the timeline for this?

Susan-1st week of January.

Erin-Yes, that's great. Strong Oak and I are working on the survey questions so that should work.

Strong Oak- Ok

Chairman Peck-Any other comments or feedback on the annual report?

Susan-we are looking under mission/vision. Are people comfortable with that? We made some changes about fostering, took out evidence base and if everyone feels comfortable? Comments on vision /mission statement? Anjeza, can you add them on the chat?

Anjeza-they are up.

Susan-No comments. Can we move to committee expansion and non-voting committee members? Are we not perusing non-committee members? I need to make sure it reflects in the

report. I will update the formal request on what we discussed today but how about non-committee members added to subcommittees?

Chairman Peck- Just to be clear, you want to add non-voting subcommittee members?

Susan-It was my understanding from past discussion, that we were going to expand the engagement of more formally incarcerated, currently incarcerated. Are we dropping the non-voting members? That came out of the planning subcommittee recommendation

Chairman Peck- if we are not having non-voting members on the full committee, we should add them to the subcommittee. Just to be consistent. We should engage but not add. What do others thing about that?

Kara-I do think consistency is important and it brings be back to what Maria D'Aaddico said last month. We should not create a two-tier process. Also, if we are naming formally incarcerated individuals, why are we not naming victims? Victim is not a dirty word. Survivor of violence.

Susan- Are people comfortable with me adding survivors of violence? Will not add a two-tier system. We also talked about seeking another 6 years team. Are we ok with leaving that there? I'm not seeing any NO's so I will keep that there. Also, now that we have the funding, we will partner with an education institution. We may explore RJ in other states, we may do conferences. We MAY do this. I want to make sure the way I'm writing this, people feel comfortable. Last piece will be establishing an Office of Restorative Justice and an executive director. Are we ok with this?

Erin-You guys did a great job. Exited about the ideas and the report.

Carolyn- Very appropriative to you Susan for doing this.

Susan-Thank you all and please bring any concerns to the next meeting.

Strong Oak- Great work on this Susan. The writing has been exquisite.

8. RJAC: Mission Statement/Vision Statement Working Group

Mission

Promote and expand restorative justice education, practices, and programming statewide in collaboration with practitioners, participants, sponsors, stakeholders, and the public, for the purpose of fostering healing for people and communities impacted by harm and systemic/structural violence and with an aim towards promoting public safety and accountability.

Vision

A Commonwealth where community accountability for harm is based on healing and not on retribution, and where effective restorative practices are embedded within schools, public institutions and communities and supported by public policy, programming, funding, and infrastructure.

9. Public Comment (10 minutes)

Jo Ann-thank you all for the incredible work, especially to Susan. I'm truly expressed by the work of the committee. Thank you for everything, even the discussion that Strong Oak brought up today. I will leave it at that.

Brenda-I want to dido what Jo Ann just said. I appreciate the deep discussion. I want to talk about the last meeting of the planning subcommittee. It felt raw to me. I was concerned for Becky and my heart wanted to reach out to her. I just want you to know that you have your support. Does she step down because of that. I never saw notes from June 22 because the last meeting was cancelled.

Jill- I'm very appreciate of the work of this committee and the support of the public voices.

10. Open Session for Topics not Reasonably Anticipated within 48 Hours of the Meeting
N/A

11. Adjourn
Meeting ended at 1pm.